



**State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations**  
**DEPARTMENT OF ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION**  
255 Westminister Street  
Providence, Rhode Island 02903-3400

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Deborah A. Gist  
Commissioner

Dear Dedicated Community Leader:

This past spring, RIDE administered the new *SurveyWorks!* survey to all Rhode Island students in grades 4 through 11. This on-line survey replaced the School Accountability for Learning and Teaching (SALT) Survey, but we retained some of the original questions so that stakeholders could look at student opinions over time.

I am pleased to report that 94% of our schools participated in the new *SurveyWorks!* student survey. The *SurveyWorks!* reports for each school contain key information that can inform teaching and learning, student health and safety, family support, and community involvement. We will post this information on our Web site by the end of next month.

During the current school year, we are expanding the survey to include parents, teachers, and administrators, and we need your help. In past years, the parent-survey response rates have steadily declined. But we know that parent input is essential to improving school performance and student achievement. As a leader in your community, you are uniquely positioned to partner with RIDE in this critical work.

In my meetings with each of you, it has been clear that you share my commitment to involving parents and the community in meaningful ways in our schools. It is also clear that you have access to many parents whom I may be unable to reach through e-mails and mass mailings. Therefore, I am asking for your support as we mobilize parents to participate in the survey this winter and spring.

Our parent survey will be launched on-line early next year, and it will be available in English as well as in Spanish, Portuguese, Khmer, Lao, and French. In addition to providing the survey on-line and on smart phones, we are working with our vendor, WestEd, and with partners in the community to provide access to the survey in public buildings such as libraries and schools.

Over the coming weeks, staff members at WestEd will be contacting you to ask that you participate in one of three focus-group sessions. These sessions will provide feedback on the survey. They will also allow you to discuss ideas and opportunities for increasing parent participation. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact *SurveyWorks!*, at [surveyworks@wested.org](mailto:surveyworks@wested.org) or toll-free at [877-787-5725](tel:877-787-5725).


**Telephone** (401) 222-4600   **Fax** (401) 222-6178   **TTY** 800-745-5555   **Voice** 800-745-6575  
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I want to thank you for all that you do in support of the children of Rhode Island. The *SurveyWorks!* parent survey represents an important opportunity for parents to let us know how we can continue to move our schools forward toward greatness and prepare all students for success in college, careers, and life.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Deborah A. Gist', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Deborah A. Gist  
Commissioner

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